GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:542
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WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS BURDEN OF SCHOOL BAGS
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Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to a recently conducted study which revealed that 38.4% children have lower back pain as reported in The Times of India dated April 22, 2006;

(b) if so. the response thereto;

(c) whether the children are still carrying heavy bags to schools despite the best efforts made by the Union Government and State Governments to minimise the school bags burden;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether the Government proposes to take furthermore steps in consultation with State Governments to reduce the school bag burden on the children particularly in primary classes; and

(f) if so, the steps taken or being taken in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI):

(a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The news item refers to a study undertaken by a private hospital of Delhi of 1134 children of 10-15 years age group studying in a few schools of Delhi. The study report concludes that `factors associated with low back pain were age, height, weight, percentage body weight carried, emotional problems, conduct problems, headaches, abdominal pain and leg pain`. This is a research study of limited nature.

(c) to (f) With a view to reducing curricular burden, the Government has taken the following steps:

I. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) issued instructions to NCERT in July,2004 to review the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) and while doing so, to take into account the Yash Pat Committee report on `Learning without Burden`. NCF-2005, which has already been adopted, accordingly recommends development of syllabi and textbooks that are age appropriate and child centered.

II. MHRD has also issued instructions to NCERT in May, 2005 to take into account the principles underlined in the `Learning without Burden` while preparing the new textbooks.

III. NCF-2005 has been circulated to all State Governments for appropriate action.

IV. As a follow-up to the above, CBSE has issued guidelines to the following effect to its affiliated schools to reduce burden of school bag on children:

(i) Making arrangements for students to leave their school bags in the school itself for classes I and II;

(ii) No homework to be given to students of classes

(iii) Instead of giving homework to students of classes 111 to V, children to do activity based work in class itself, as an alternative to homework.

(iv) Schools should restrict number of prescribed textbooks specially at the primary level;

(v) Schools to set up class libraries;

(vi) Continuous and comprehensive evaluation upto class VIII with no pass/fail results upto class V; and

(vii) Publication of curriculum documents for Secondary and Senior Secondary classes every year, clearly defining the scope and extent of the syllabus in each subject.However, implementation of above measures by schools has been uneven. Besides, parents

also need to become aware of the importance of not overloading the child`s school bag.